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On the Time for Armed Struggle

Some General Lessons of the Armed Struggle in the Philippines

Since the great revolutionary wars of liberation began earlier in this century, few issues have drawn more controversy in revolutionary and pseudo-revolutionary circles than the question of armed struggle and of how and when to employ it. On the one hand examples can be cited of disaster following premature rushes into armed struggle, while on the other hand there have been failures of movements to realise revolutionary potential by holding back from armed methods.

Certainly it is a fact that over the past quarter of a century, one of the outstanding features of world developments has been the readiness of large numbers of people to accept and to participate in what is commonly known as the highest form of revolutionary struggle, the armed struggle. For both the mass of the people, and those who have ruled and oppressed them, this is the truly great point of social crisis, the outcome of which can lead to a sweeping change of political power.

Because of the decisive results that can follow from an armed smashing of the main instruments of power held by a ruling class or a foreign oppressor, some of those who acquire a revolutionary outlook are eager to move to the stage of armed struggle; and their concept of it as the highest form of revolutionary struggle causes them to cast discredit upon other forms as 'less advanced', as amounting to collaboration with or capitulation to the class enemy.

Too often the aura of glory associated with taking up arms has obscured hard prosaic truths and realities in the interplay of forces in a period of sharp struggle.

The armed liberation struggles that began in Africa, particularly in the southern part of the continent in the early 1960s, could and did benefit from the experiences and the lessons, the successes and the mistakes, of the revolutionary wars that had preceded them, in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere. Today, lessons from the strategy and tactics and experiences of FRELIMO, MPLA, PAIGC, ZAPU, ANC and others are already being studied with hopes of application by revolutionaries in other countries.

Learning from Experience:

This analysis and understanding of the revolutionary experiences of others is indispensable in the intertwined circumstances of the contemporary world. There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from such studies. Perhaps the first and most important is that conditions vary greatly in the countries concerned, and that strategy and tactics in each case have started from these, and in must start from these. Furthermore, certain conditions of crisis in the ruling order together with mass

preparation for advanced struggle must exist before armed struggle is possible or feasible. No responsible revolutionary would contend otherwise after the abundant evidence of relatively recent history.

Another conclusion of significance is that a system or a ruling order defeated and overthrown by armed revolution is in most cases unlikely to regain power; but a revolutionary movement defeated in an armed struggle is invariably able to recover soon and to resume the contest for power, in forms armed or otherwise, until victory is attained.

The fact that stands out from the latter conclusion is that while armed struggle may be the highest form of revolutionary struggle, it is the be-all and end-all of a revolutionary movement, which may move from less-advanced forms to the highest form and back to less-advanced without losing either its vanguard role or its sight of main goals.

One of the major arenas of revolutionary armed struggle in the contemporary period has been in the Philippines, location of the Communist-led Huk movement. The experiences of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines offer an interesting example of the complex, varied and fluctuating processes that may occur in a liberation struggle.

For a period of 32 years, since the beginning of 1942, the Philippine national liberation movement has known constant armed struggle of one form and degree or another, particularly the main sectors of it under the guidance of the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP). At times this has reached the extent of full-scale revolutionary war on a regional or on a national scale; at other times it has had the character of small unit actions.

Contributing to this fighting spirit of the Filipino people is a long history filled with astonishingly numerous instances of armed uprising, insurrection or full-scale revolutionary war. During the 378 years of Spanish colonial rule, from 1520 to 1898, over 200 recorded cases of armed revolt occurred, culminating in the great Revolution of 1896, the first genuine colonial revolution in Asia. During the 48 years of US colonial rule, that followed the US imperialist seizure of the country from Spain, lasting from 1898 to 1946, Filipinos in nearly 50 other separate episodes took to arms for liberation or against abuses, including major nation-wide guerrilla wars against US conquest and against Japanese occupation during World War II. Since the neo-colonial independence of the Philippines in 1946, not a single year has passed without armed struggles in one part or another of the country, particularly the major Huk guerrilla war for national liberation lasting from 1946 to 1956.

Two Sides of the Balance Sheet

Some observers may be tempted to draw a conclusion from this that the Filipino people have a very high political and revolutionary consciousness, and that decisive numbers of them will at any given time readily move to the highest form of revolutionary struggle,

provided a determined leadership is prepared to make such calls or demands upon them. This would be an ill-founded assumption.

The impressive record of militant struggle by the Filipino people needs to be set beside the fact that none of the revolutionary wars and uprisings was really successful in achieving its aims. The vast majority of these had no clear-cut aims but were temporary episodes, of a millenarian character, or of spontaneous upsurge, or of sporadic revolt, in which conscious or well-developed revolutionary movements did not figure, and which were either quickly or soon suppressed. However, even when effective and skillful leadership of a high order *did* exist, as in the case of the Revolution of 1896, in its continuation into a war against US conquest at the turn of the century, and in the two major Communist-led guerrilla wars of the recent decades, the armed struggles did not end in triumph for the people's cause, and were followed by an ebbing of the revolutionary tide.

Although the Revolution of 1896, begun by an organised revolutionary movement called the Katipunan, shook Spanish colonialism to its foundations it did not succeed in overthrowing Spain's rule, which itself succumbed and surrendered to the conquest of a more powerful, predatory US imperialism.

The next important appearance of a revolutionary army in the Philippines did not occur until the beginning of 1942, after Japanese invasion in World War II. In the intervening time a deeply-rooted working class movement had been organised among urban workers and poor peasants, with the main leadership coming from the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* or PKP (Communist Party of the Philippines, founded in 1930).

The organised peasantry were located chiefly in the central provinces of the main Philippine island of Luzon, in Neuva Ecija, Pampanga, Bulacan and Tarlac. Militant peasant unions had developed there because the semi-feudal tenancy relations were more extensive and abusive in that region and because it was relatively close to and influenced by the trade union movement in the city of Manila, the Philippine industrial and political capital.

Guerrilla warfare of a revolutionary type against Japanese occupation would not have taken place without these preconditions of mass organisation and Communist leadership, experienced over a period of years in a multitude of strikes, demonstrations, legal battles and class-based electoral campaigns. The *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban Sa Hapon*, or *Hukbalahap* (literally Army of the People Against Japan), the PKP-led guerrilla army that was built and that numbered 15,000 to 20,000 soldiers by the end of the war, was mobilised mainly out of the pre-war peasant unions, the National Association of Philippine Peasants and the General Workers' Union, augmented by Communist trade unionists and intellectuals from Manila.

In the Philippines, resistance to the Japanese was very widespread; guerrilla units of one kind and another developed not only in Central Luzon but existed in every region. These were mostly set up in loyalty to the colonial regime and were led by US army officers,

Philippine colonial army men, conservative Filipino politicians and similar ruling group elements. For the most part these units were relatively passive until called into action in co-ordination with the re-invading US forces in the latter part of 1944; in the case of their leaders at least, they were hostile to the *Hukbalahap*, which was the only guerrilla force that organised and politicalised the masses, set up underground governments, and functioned as a revolutionary movement.

A revolutionary armed liberation movement was possible against Japanese fascism only in areas where Communist-led mass organisations and their struggles had previously existed. The PKP-led *Hukbalahap* made errors and had shortcomings in feeling its ways in guerrilla struggle, and these retarded the movement's growth; expansion into areas was also made difficult, and occurred to a very limited extent because prior mass organisational work had not been done and because anti-Communist guerrilla units were established in such areas; these impeded access to the unorganised masses. Within the context of the anti-fascist struggle, it would have been disunifying and of aid to the Japanese to carry a fight to such units (although some clashes did occur). At the end of the war, therefore, the organised Filipino masses with a revolutionary army were localised in an area not much larger than that of the pre-war mass movement. However, the organisation, political consciousness, combat experience and general maturity of the movement in this area had been raised to a far higher level.

In recent years ultra-left elements, dismissing the validity of anti-fascist concepts, have attacked the PKP for not opposing US imperialism as well as Japanese imperialism during World War II, and then for not converting a war-time guerrilla struggle immediately into an armed struggle for national liberation against a continued US imperialist presence. Questions raised against the anti-fascist struggle as such scarcely deserve an answer. Criticism of the post-war national liberation struggle is another matter, and requires answering.

Combining Legal with Illegal

At war's end the PKP was confronted with serious problems of strategy and tactics. In relation to the Philippines as a whole, PKP organisation, influence and the Huk movement it had built were confined to a relatively small area. Independence of the Philippines, negotiated before the war by the conservative Filipino ruling groups, was scheduled to occur soon after the war, in July 1946, so that a national liberation issue was muted. The neo-colonial intentions of the 'independence' were understood by very few Filipinos, the majority of whom, after a very harsh Japanese occupation were inclined to welcome returning US forces as 'liberators'. A euphoria of peace and independence pervaded most of the nation. Conflict existed only in Central Luzon, where US imperialism, aware of the limited scope of the revolutionary movement, deliberately sought to provoke a 'peace and order' situation as an excuse for suppressing it.

To meet this situation, the PKP adopted a legal, parliamentary struggle programme, to rebuild trade unions and peasant unions and to extend them as widely as possible, and to

develop a nationalist, anti-imperialist united front political force. This would help consolidate existing bases and reach to and educate wider masses of people. A united front political party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), was set up with PKP assistance to participate in elections, especially the national election of April 1946.

At the same time, however, the *Hukbalahap* veterans retained their arms, refusing to surrender them to the US colonial regime or to the handpicked neo-colonial government of Filipino collaborators to whom independence was delivered; they used their arms for defence against landlord-directed assaults that had begun on the organised peasantry as soon as US authority had been restored. The PKP conducted armed defence of the mass organisations and of organised barrios (villages) while trying to expand the broad movement by every legal form.

This period, in other words, was marked by a transition from full-scale emphasis on the highest form of revolutionary struggle to a main emphasis on 'less-advanced' forms. A central aim of this shift was to be able to reach and organise masses of people, especially those new to organisation, as quickly as possible, and to awaken them to the realities of the neo-colonial independence.

The period when this was freely possible after World War II was relatively brief, from mid-1945 until August 1946. Nevertheless, some very important work was done. The new peasant union, the *Pam bansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid* or PKM (National Union of Peasants), brought peasant organisation to a new height in Central and Southern Luzon and began to reach beyond these regions; the new trade union movement, the Congress of Labour Organisations (CLO), rebuilt unions not only in Manila but in provincial towns and established fraternal links with other union federations elsewhere in the Philippines; and the Democratic Alliance achieved at least the framework of a national party. In general, the spread of the mass movement and its component parts was faster and wider in this short period than in the nearly four years of guerrilla existence.

The height was reached in the election of April 1946 when the Democratic Alliance candidates for Congress swept the elections in the Central Luzon provinces and made a strong showing in peripheral provinces, for the first time putting an anti-imperialist bloc in the Philippine Congress (it held the decisive balance in the voting on the neo-colonial legislation demanded by the US to enable continued imperialist control of the country).

Again to Arms

Much of the subsequent successful expansion of the Huk movement in the armed struggle that broke out in August 1946 was due to the organisational and contact groundwork laid in this brief period of legal, parliamentary struggle. For example, the creation of a Huk armed force outside of Luzon in the central islands, especially on Panay Island, was largely an outcome of the links established in 1945/46 between the CLO on Luzon and the Philippine Labour Federation based on Panay. Huk expansion forces in the

armed struggle of the late 1940s and early 1950s tended to follow the path of the PKM, CLO and DA organisational work done in 1945-46.

It was the success of the PKP-influenced mass movement in legal, parliamentary struggle, while peasants in Central Luzon continued to retain arms, that caused US imperialism and its neo-colonial allies to arbitrarily oust DA congressmen from office (on grounds that a 'peace and order' problem existed in their constituencies and caused voter terrorisation) and to embark on savage military suppression of the popular movement. The objectives of this 'mailed fist' campaign that began in August 1946 were to smash the armed peasant units in Central Luzon and to drive the anti-imperialist movement out of the arena of legal struggle.

The post-war Huk armed national liberation struggle began, therefore, not as a planned uprising but as armed defence against suppression. At first it was not a total fascist policy imposed by the government; while military suppression went on in the Central and Southern Luzon provinces, legal mass work could still be carried on, especially in the trade unions, but also in most other ways in Manila and other cities. In this mixed and confused period, characterised at the outset by the demoralisation that usually accompanies the beginning of harsh government suppressive measures, the PKP had to struggle to overcome disarray in its organisation and to develop under fire a new strategic and tactical line to fit the new situation.

On the one hand, a PKP demand was made for a 'democratic peace' around which manoeuvres were conducted to expose the true nature of the neo-colonial regime nationally and to win sympathy and allies for the Huk movement; and on the other hand the armed struggle was strengthened in the rural areas for any eventuality.

As the neo-colonial government between 1946 and 1948 became progressively more discredited for its brutal suppression policy, for its corruption, for its electoral fraud, and for a steep economic decline that was the consequence of rapacious US imperialist economic domination and exploitation, a debate occurred with the PKP over the conduct of the struggle; the question was whether or not to give the main emphasis to armed struggle and to the revolutionary overthrow of the neo-colonial regime as the central issue.

In May 1948 those favouring armed struggle as the main form of struggle won overwhelming support in PKP organs and assumed full leadership of the movement. A policy was pressed of all-out nation-wide armed expansion by Huk forces, the name of which was changed from the anachronistic war-time *Hukbalahap* to *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan* or HMB (Army of National Liberation).

Expansion was carried out by military-political teams, 50 to 100 strong, that, utilising mountain and jungle trails, fanned out from Central Luzon base areas. These in time established bases in wholly new regions previously unreachable by left-wing movements, created barrio support organisations, and recruited members for both the armed forces and the PKP. From an original five base provinces the HMB expanded to and set up bases

in 27 provinces between 1948 and 1951, under the circumstances a remarkable achievement.

In January 1950, following a particularly fraudulent election that caused national outrage, the PKP and HMB declared the existence of a revolutionary situation and called for the armed revolutionary overthrow of the 'imperialist-puppet regime'. All organisational activities of a legal, peaceful or parliamentary nature were dispensed with, and all possible PKP members and supporters were thrown into the development of the armed struggle. The movement was imbued with the perspective of a relatively short struggle, with the estimate of a deteriorating situation for the neo-colonial regime from which no recovery was considered possible.

Summing Up

These estimates and aims proved to be illusory and unrealisable. The Huk national liberation struggle in the Philippines in this period failed to attain its goals, failed to convert a strategic defensive situation decisively into one of strategic offensive, failed to consolidate or to maintain its expansion bases, and, between 1950 and 1956, suffered a disastrous defeat.

In its subsequent assessment of the reasons for this, the PKP has criticised the following:

The erroneous estimate that a revolutionary situation existed at the beginning of 1950 and that the existing regime could no longer rule in the old way; The reliance on armed struggle as virtually the only form of struggle and the abandonment of other forms of struggle that were not only feasible but essential for mobilising the masses;

The tendency for the PKP to proclaim its hegemony over the national liberation struggle, and the corresponding failure to develop an anti-imperialist national democratic united front; an underestimation of the intervention by US imperialism to aid its neo-colonial allies.

Although US troops were not employed against the Huk movement directly even from the extensive US military bases in the Philippines, the Philippine government army was totally armed, equipped, organised, trained and directed in counter-insurgency operations by a large Joint US Military Advisory Group, which controlled the Philippine army and intelligence services under a Mutual Assistance Pact. With no outside aid from international allies whatsoever, the HMB was not able to match the firepower and technological capability of its opponents.

Primarily the PKP was at fault for failing to give serious attention to the question of international support, either moral or material, for the liberation struggle. However, the island character of the Philippines, without a border with friendly countries or areas where guerilla forces could retreat, regroup, rest, train or create supply lines, was a basic factor in the military situation, as was the many-islanded archipelago itself which was an obstacle to expansion and to mobility of the HMB.

Military disadvantages were perhaps less significant than the fact US imperialism was able to put forward an appearance of reform in measures that swayed large numbers of the Filipino people at a critical stage. From 1950 onwards such reforms as a toning down of the more flagrant corruption and electoral fraud, a moderation of the more brutal methods of terror and suppression by the government armed forces, and an adoption of land reform legislation all tended to affect the masses, including those in Central Luzon provinces. None of these measures were serious, deep or lasting, least of all the gestures at land reform; but the fact that significant numbers of people clutched at them hopefully (a tendency most noticeable in middle strata of the population) indicated that the PKP estimate that the people were no longer willing to be ruled in the same way was premature.

In the early 1950s the HMB and the PKP were decimated by repeated government military operations, suffering extremely heavy losses in armed forces and political cadres. One of the first disasters, due to faulty security measures and to overconfidence, was the capture in October 1950 of the PKP secretariat, at the time in charge of directing the struggle. In most of the new regions, expansion forces were wiped out, and so many had been sent out on expansion assignment from the Central Luzon bases that these were gravely weakened as well. In the PKP, the entire central committee and political bureau members chosen to replace them in 1951 suffered the same total fate. Similar devastating losses and attrition occurred among cadres of secondary rank.

The decimation of party cadres and the resultant weakening of the organisational structure of the Party and of discipline led in some cases to the degeneration of Huk armed forces into banditry and gangsterism. Worst of these cases was in western Pampanga province where a former Huk cadre, Commander Sumulong, built his own domain of 'protectionism', mulcting the peasants while making deals with landlords, reactionary politicians and police, and with US army commanders at the huge Clark Air Base. Sumulong and his associates pretended still to be Huks and to lead a 'people's army', while committing depredations that were publicised in the reactionary press as 'Huk activities'. The Sumulong gang persisted until 1970, when both PKP armed anti-gangster action and government harassment caused the surrender or liquidation of its leaders.

Organisation - The Deciding Factor

When the armed struggle of this period had been subdued or had subsided, it was the original base areas of Central and Southern Luzon that remained relatively stable. In the expansion areas little remained of a mass movement that had not had time to grow strong. *These experiences tended to confirm a belief that solid and stable mass bases were those that had been built not so much by armed struggle as by the long and patient work and experience of organisation and education around the daily life, needs and demands of the people.*

In guerrilla struggles where liberated areas are possible, the organisation of people and their real involvement in mass work, productive effort or self-government during the armed struggle is feasible. In the case of the Philippines, however, it has not been possible in the modern period to achieve liberated areas. Both the *Hukbbalahap* during World War II and the HMB

Operated in and attempted to maintain an underground movement in the same territory where government troops were based and moved freely and where the ruling government functioned. The geographical features of the Philippine islands permitted easy mobility and relatively rapid operations of the government forces, and prevented militarily permanent or stable bases for Huk forces. In the course of the struggle in the post-war period US and neo-colonial forces improved the advantages they had, building military roads into and criss-crossing Huk base areas, draining swamps that had been guerrilla refuges, and gridding the country with counter-guerrilla facilities, reducing further any liberated area potential.

The nature of guerrilla activity itself had to undergo changes as this occurred. During the Japanese occupation - i.e., in a war against a foreign invader - it was possible to maintain large guerrilla units of up to regimental size, and to bivouac in or very near the barrios. This meant very close relations with the people. Large unit, barrio-based forces were possible in the early post-war period, too; but as the US and neo-colonial forces perfected their tactics, guerrilla forces were compelled to base themselves deeper and deeper in mountains and jungles, and to curtail the size of units, thus undergoing considerable isolation from the people. This process continued until the large guerrilla unit of even platoon size became risky and vulnerable, making the small unit mandatory, although with carefully-designed tactics it became easier to keep close to or to live among the people.

An observable aspect of total or overwhelming emphasis on armed struggle is that mass participation in struggle may actually diminish, although it is usually believed that mass support of guerrillas has the opposite characteristic. Armed guerrillas represent as a rule a small percentage of the population. Their participation is of a high order; but for most of the rest of the people in Philippine conditions all but limited underground organisation and activity are banned, especially during the large scale evacuations that occur. During the peak of counter-insurgency, when guerrillas may be driven into isolation from the masses, the masses may also suffer isolation from politicalisation and lack the organised means of resisting a terror coupled with 'reforms'. *The question of forms of organisation for those not holding the guns becomes of major importance.*

By 1956 the PKP had shifted its main emphasis from armed forms of struggle to legal, parliamentary forms. This was not wholly dictated by weakness and setback: a new situation had developed in the Philippines, in part stimulated by the long Huk struggle, in which a nationalist movement, particularly of bourgeois nationalist elements, was growing and coming into conflict with the neo-colonial policies and methods of US

imperialism. The possibility of broad united front work and of creating new forms of mass organisation as well as the revival of old forms was becoming increasingly apparent.

To Go Back - As Well As Forward

As in 1945, this was a transition by the PKP from the highest form of revolutionary struggle to 'less-advanced' forms. It was possible to cling to armed struggle on a minor scale, with the orientation that the conditions in the country could deteriorate again and make masses of people ready for it; but to have continued to make this the *main* concentration would have meant even greater isolation from the masses in a period when extensive mass organisation along other lines was possible. The line adopted was above all based on the necessity of utilising forms which maintained the closest contact with the masses. Armed forces that were not completely dissolved were kept in being on a small unit scale, chiefly in a security capacity, to protect underground cadres (the PKP has remained constantly underground, outlawed by an Anti-Subversion Law that provides up to the death penalty for violation), to protect organised places from infiltration by enemy intelligence agents, and to carry out people's justice against traitors, spies and criminals.

In the decade between 1956 and 1966 the PKP was able to rebuild itself and to set in motion a massive open national democratic movement. Old cadres emerging from prison or being reactivated after a period of demoralised passivity played a part in this; but the main organisational thrust came from a large number of new young members who had been both inspired by the example of the Huk struggle and aroused by the frustrations of a neo-colonial independence.

A new peasant union, the *Malayang Samahang Magsasaka* or MASAKA (Free Association of Peasants), arose and spread rapidly in the old Huk base areas of Central and Southern Luzon, augmented by the failure or non-implementation of the 'land reform' introduced on paper to win people away from the Huk movement in the early 1950s. New anti-imperialist trade union leaders came to the fore in the cities to oppose the class collaborationism that had been foisted on the labour movement following the outlawing of the Congress of Labour Organisations in 1951. A new type of broad nationalist organisation, the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism, activated intellectuals, businessmen and middle class groups. Most vocal of all were new youth organisations of militant nationalism which drew large numbers of student youth as well as worker and peasant youth.

With the organisational base laid, this movement grew by leaps and bounds between 1966 and 1972. One of the most important features of this legal mass movement was that it developed successfully not only on Luzon but on all the other main islands in the Philippines - Cebu, Negros, Panay, Mindanao and others. The organisation and influence of the PKP was able in this period to reach much further and more broadly than in the days of Huk armed expansion.

US imperialism and reactionary Filipino neo-colonial interests, alarmed by this development, set out, as in 1946, to smash the popular mass national democratic movement. From 1969 the 'Nixon Doctrine', as elsewhere in Asia, prepared the ground for a fascist-type militarist system in the Philippines that would have as one of its chief aims the abolition of democratic liberties, including suppression of the legal mass movement.

Disruption from Within

However, the key tactics for putting this into effect were devised and carried out within the mass movement itself. The instrument used was a group of young Filipinos who professed to follow the precepts of Mao Tse-tung, and the issues involved were those of armed struggle. From 1968, following the expulsion from the PKP in 1967 of the only leading cadre who had advocated Maoist concepts and who had used sordid intrigue to try to capture the Party organisation for his ends, a Maoist organisation was developed with Peking endorsement, which attempted to divert the national democratic movement into immediate full-scale armed struggle for the overthrow of the government

Usurping the name of the 'Communist Party of the Philippines', which itself was calculated to cause much confusion among the organised masses and the people in general, the Maoist group in 1969 set up its own 'New People's Army' and called for armed struggle as the only revolutionary path of the Filipino people, claiming that a 'revolutionary situation' existed. Being a group wholly of petty-bourgeois students, the Maoists had a major problem of creating an armed force among the peasantry to carry out Mao's mechanically-transferred theory of 'surrounding the cities from the countryside'; the solution arrived at was to form an alliance with a split-off band of the Sumulong gang.

From the outset the Maoist group devoted its main attention to an attack on the PKP, calling PKP leaders 'renegades' and 'revisionists' for not accepting the most extreme of the Mao Tse-Tung theories on armed struggle, and finally resorting to betraying the names of PKP leaders to government intelligence agencies and to employing violence against PKP members and followers. The activities of the Maoists duplicated and had open encouragement from the general international line emanating from Peking of splitting left forces and of pursuing ultra-left tactics; they would have had little effect however, but for the enormous publicity given to them by the imperialist and neo-colonial press and other media in the Philippines, and for the collaborative arrangements offered and entered into with them by reactionary neo-colonial political forces, including in particular Catholic Church groups. These allies of Maoism, with the *CIA* playing a leading part, projected the Maoist group as the 'genuine revolutionaries' in the Philippines, and denigrated the PKP as having sold out, abandoned struggle or ceased to exist.

These tactics, vigorously abetted by US imperialism and its allies, caused serious divisions in the national democratic movement, especially among the student youth who were its

most vocal and articulate sector and susceptible to ultra-radical slogans. Among the organised peasants and workers the effect was very slight. The 'NPA' significantly failed to establish itself in Central Luzon, where the peasants were the most advanced in the country in struggle and organisational experience, and it was compelled to retreat from that region and seek refuge in the relatively remote northern province of Isabela.

The 1970-1972 period in the Philippines witnessed great turbulence. Neo-colonial political factions - Nacionalista Party, Liberal Party and the Catholic Christian Social Movement - fought each other for the privilege of partnership with US interests in shaping the authoritarian system called for by the 'Nixon Doctrine', and increasingly resorted to their own armed forces and 'warlordism'. All factions, including the US imperialists, desired a climate of violence to justify a 'strong-man' grip on power. In collaboration with the liberal Party and Christian Social Movement, the Maoists were drawn into and used in the power struggle. Most of all, US imperialism sought to goad the Maoist and 'NPA' not only to split the national democratic movement but to push it into adopting armed methods prematurely so that it could be bloodily suppressed, as occurred in Indonesia.

In this situation, the PKP worked to mobilise the people for the defence of democratic liberties and against the imposition of fascism on one hand, and against the adventurist unity-wrecking line of the Maoists on the other that played into the suppressive plans of imperialism. Some PKP members, in the belief that Maoist ultra-left slogans and actions had to be matched in order to keep the PKP in the vanguard and not lose leadership of the people, were provoked into committing and publicly claiming PKP responsibility for armed actions. The ideological struggle against adventurism and provocation had to be waged within the PKP as well as among the masses.

The Theory of Struggle

The PKP theoretical organ *Ang Komunista* (February 1971) replied to Maoist provocations and attacks in this way:

It is not armed struggle *versus* parliamentary struggle that is the issue) but whether 'armed struggle is the only way' or a revolutionary Party should learn to combine both forms of struggle. On this issue, as in others, we stand firmly on the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. We uphold the principle of *combining* parliamentary and armed struggle; the exact combination depends, of course, on the prevailing political situation . .

Parliamentary struggle does not mean putting up candidates for elective positions in order to transform the nature of neo-colonial government. It simply means laying stress on utilising whatever democratic rights are available. Strikes, demonstrations, leafleteering, factory gate agitation, etc., form part of parliamentary struggle. In our circumstances parliamentary struggle is not a method of capturing state power and smashing the old state machine. It is merely a technique of breaking the Party's isolation and conducting revolutionary work under extreme conditions of illegality

. . . Our Party has always maintained that, in the Philippine context, armed struggle is an indispensable aspect of revolutionary strategy

We do not entertain the illusion that the neo-colonial ruling classes in the Philippines will ever give up their power and privileges peacefully. The seizure of power can only be accomplished through an armed uprising. But we reject the undialectical thesis that 'armed struggle is the only way'. Armed struggle is doomed to certain failure without popular support, and in building popular support we must utilise other forms of struggle allowed by real circumstances.

In our assessment of the existing balance of forces, the time for a strategic offensive has yet to come. We are still at the stage of preparation and the main form of struggle is legal or parliamentary struggle. The principal tasks are the politicalisation and organisation of the masses, including the most backward sectors who up to now constitute the vast majority. The armed struggle must be waged even today but it occupies a secondary and subordinate role in relation to the parliamentary struggle. As the revolutionary process develops, however, the armed struggle will steadily gain importance until objective conditions shall dictate that it be adopted as the main form.

This whole period terminated abruptly in September 1972 when President Ferdinand Marcos moved decisively both to eliminate his neo-colonial rivals and to suppress the national democratic movement. Declaring a state of martial law, he assumed supreme dictatorial powers, suspended representative government, elections and the activity of political parties, outlawed the principal national democratic mass organisations, forbade free speech or assembly, and banned the right to strike or demonstrate.

In his martial law proclamation, Marcos justified his step wholly on the ground that the 'NPA' posed an immediate threat of the armed overthrow of the government. The adventurist and provocative Maoist armed struggle line had fulfilled the role designed for it by imperialism, and had provided the excuse for suppressing the promising Filipino mass movement before it could reach the stage of seriously challenging the neo-colonial government.

The 1946 and 1972 periods had similarities in the strategy and tactics of imperialism and its neo-colonial allies in suppressing national democratic mass movements of the Filipino people. In both cases imperialism actively worked to create a 'peace and order' situation in order to force the revolutionary movement into armed struggle in unfavorable circumstances not of its own choosing, revealing that the greatest imperialist fear was of the potential of open mass movements. Having succeeded in suppressing the armed struggle of the HMB in the 1950s (it was used in US military circles as proof of the validity of counter-insurgency methods), imperialism was prepared to provoke or manufacture armed struggle in the early 1970s out of confidence that it could be dealt with and made use of to smash the national democratic organisations.

Since the imposition of the martial law dictatorship, the Maoists in the Philippines have continued to insist that the armed struggle is the main form of struggle today, and to call for the armed overthrow of the dictatorship. Although this has been called for insistently since 1969, it has failed to evoke a response from the Filipino masses. Lacking this response, the Maoists have turned increasingly to an affiance with Catholic Church sectors against Marcos, a tendency that is still related to the intrigues of US imperialism which, not fully satisfied with Marcos and having contradictions with him, fosters an opposition as a lever of control.

The PKP, refusing to be involved in neo-colonial power struggles, has adopted the line in a time of difficult semi-fascist conditions of utilising every possible form of activity to maintain close links with the masses. It finds it possible to work amongst the masses, to bring to them its programme, and to work toward its proclaimed goal of helping to create 'a national united front of all exploited classes, of all patriotic and democratic forces'. In February 1973 the PKP held its underground 5th Congress in Central Luzon and adopted a new programme in which the Party's attitude toward forms of struggle was defined in this way:

The PKP is the party of the Filipino working class. It rejects putschism, coup d'état, foco guerrillaism and anarcho-terrorist revolutionism that stands apart from the sentiment of the masses. It does not sanction any political activity that attempts to split the masses from their vanguard party.

It is to the interest of the masses that the road to revolution is without bloodshed, and they desire that the transfer of power from the forests, of imperialism, feudalism and monopoly capital to the political parties of all exploited classes be peaceful. The conditions for violence are necessarily determined by those who possess the instruments of violence, namely, the ruling circles of imperialism, feudalism and monopoly capital. The PKP and all revolutionary forces must be vigilant and must always be in a state of preparedness in every way to prevent the enemies of the people from obstructing the people's way to peaceful revolutionary transformation of our society. The PKP upholds the right of the people to use force against those who use force against the people.

The PKP has proven its readiness and capacity to lead the Filipino people in the sharpest and most advanced of struggles, in which thousands of its best members have given their lives. From these it has drawn the lesson, however, that the overriding need is to maintain close links with the masses, in city and countryside, to draw them into every possible kind of mass organisation and activity, and to involve masses in struggle in which they have the sense of participation. Revolutionary armed forces must serve as a detachment of the mass movement, but the highest forms of revolutionary struggle are those that occur when the greatest masses of people are resolutely set in motion for change.

Political and Military Forces in Revolutionary War

The August Revolution, like people's revolutions in other countries, has taught the South Vietnamese revolutionaries that any revolution with a marked popular character must use both political and military forces to secure victory. Revolution being the uprising of the oppressed and exploited masses, one must adopt the revolutionary mass viewpoint to understand revolutionary violence which involves two forces - political and military forces - and two forms of struggle - political and armed struggle - and thereby to realize the offensive position of revolution when revolutionary situations are ripe.

On the contrary, if one considers revolutionary violence merely from the point of view of armed struggle, and consequently takes into account only the military force of the two sides to appraise the balance of forces between revolution and counter-revolution, mistakes will be inevitable: either one will underestimate the strength of the revolution and dare not mobilize the masses for insurrection, or, once the insurrection has been launched, one will not dare step up the offensive to push ahead the revolution, or when the armed struggle has been unleashed, one cannot avoid falling back to a defensive strategy.

In 1959-1960, when the American imperialists and their henchmen used most barbarous fascist means to sow terror and carry out mass slaughter, the South Vietnamese revolutionaries held that the enemy had sustained a basic political defeat and could no longer rule as in the past, while the people had come to realize more and more clearly that they could no longer live under the enemy's yoke and had to rise up and wage a life-and-death struggle to liberate themselves. Under those circumstances the South Vietnamese people rose up, using mainly political struggle, broke the enemy's grip, controlled large rural areas, wrested back power, redistributed land, set up 'self-management committees', made every effort to develop their forces in every field, and launched a widespread people's war to carry on their liberation struggle.

In South Vietnam, as the vast countryside has a natural economy not very dependent on the towns and an almost exclusively peasant population living on agriculture, the aggressors and their henchmen ruling in urban centres cannot establish a strict control over the rural areas. That is why, when conditions are ripe for revolution, the villages constitute the weakest spot where the puppet administration becomes shaky and sinks into a crisis, hence the possibility of most rapidly starting *local insurrections* and of destroying the enemy's power apparatus considerably.

After liberating extensive rural areas, the people gradually built up large strong armed forces, rapidly organized powerful political forces, vigorously boosted the revolutionary movement throughout the South, stepped up political and military struggle, firmly upheld their offensive position, foiled all the enemy's political and military schemes, and kept on

pushing forward the South Vietnamese revolution. Since then, *the close combination of political and military struggle constitutes the basic form of revolutionary violence in South Vietnam*, the most suitable one to resist neocolonialism. It has been used not only in the course of insurrections, but also in dealing with the American imperialists' 'special warfare' and limited warfare'. This combination of political and military struggle is carried out in accordance with the balance of forces in the *three strategic rural, urban and hill-forest areas*, as well as with the general tasks of the revolution and the specific tasks of each period.

Like the national-democratic revolution all over the country in the past, the present South Vietnamese revolution has the workers and peasants as its main force and the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class as the cornerstone of the national united front. Therefore, it cannot repose exclusively on the revolutionary forces in the countryside, but has to build up revolutionary forces in the towns as well, and impel revolutionary struggle in both of these areas. In the process of the struggle the revolutionary movements in both areas have been closely co-ordinated, greatly influencing and vigorously impelling each other. If the revolutionary upsurge in the countryside some years ago made its impact strongly felt upon the revolutionary movement in the towns, the seething struggle of the urban masses now has created highly favourable conditions for uprisings in the countryside and the extension of the people's war.

The recent fierce political struggle of the townsfolk has restrained, sometimes slowed down or seriously upset, the military activities of the enemy on the battlefields, thus efficaciously helping the offensive of the revolutionary armed forces; conversely, the military successes on the battlefields, like the repeated attacks by the liberation troops against the enemy's rear bases and dens in the towns and cities have accelerated the growth of the urban revolutionary movement.

In short, *the South Vietnamese revolution develops by using the revolutionary violence of the masses to launch local insurrections in the countryside, organizing revolutionary forces in both rural and urban areas - military and political forces alike - and holding firm the offensive position to attack the enemy with military and political actions and agitation among his troops in all the three strategic rural, urban and hill-forest areas so as to smash gradually all his military and political activities and win complete victory.*

([Volodia Teitelboim](#), 1916-2008, was a Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Chile)

Reflections on the 1,000 Days of Popular Unity Rule

Lenin took careful account of the lessons of the Paris Commune and the 1905-07 revolution in Russia to evolve on their basis the strategy and tactics which in 1917 led to the victorious October Revolution. Similarly, it is essential for Chileans to make a deep study of the 1,000 days of Popular Unity rule, in all the diversity of its typical and atypical factors and features, and draw proper theoretical and practical conclusions. By analysing the highly valuable data at our disposal, we can - in a definite social micro-world, within the bounds of a small country of 10 million - ascertain the characteristics of a political drama of universal significance. We can make a sober assessment of the achievements and miscalculations of the popular movement, of its correct moves and its mistakes. The evidence we have also makes it possible and necessary to study the enemy's methods and devices, to compile a veritable manual showing how present-day counter-revolution can strangle revolution.

To be sure, the only political value of such manuals is that they point to a specific example governed by general laws, with all the peculiarities of place and time that characterise every revolution and every counter-revolution.

We will endeavour to examine the past impartially and self-critically, suggest correctives to our activity and reveal the overt and covert lines of enemy action, all of which is bound to make for greater clarity regarding our strategy and tactics, as well as those of the enemy. This will be the prologue to introducing corrections into our activity to transform the people's defeat into victory.

The Role of Elections and the 'Peaceful Path'

We think the events in Chile indicate, in the final analysis, that, given definite circumstances resulting from a complex course of historical evolution and from a painstaking building up of forces and uniting all the strata striving for social change, it is possible to achieve through elections much more than an ordinary or even a considerable electoral victory and, on the other hand, much less than real power. Those events also show that no electoral victory holds a guarantee of its solidity. Such a victory can be a notable advance on a long and generally thorny path abounding in dangerous curves and

crossings and often skirting a precipice. But unless victory in elections is followed up by a vast offensive of a popular majority to turn it into real power which the masses would be willing and able to hold and defend against all obstacles, against all attempts by enemies at home and abroad to ignore and do away with this power, the result may be, or is even bound to be, defeat.

Indeed, victory in elections brings power only in part. Being the beginning of a new stage in the revolutionary process and the completion of previous stages, it does not come overnight but is a result of the revolutionary process as a whole, of a growing structural crisis in the country stemming from the deterioration of the general crisis of capitalism. It is the ultimate result of the accumulation of preliminary factors reflecting the maturing of diverse forms of class struggle.

That was how a pre-revolutionary situation shaped up in Chile. The Communist Party regarded elections as a form of action in the struggle to transform society, and for this it required winning majority support.

'Political majority' means something more solid and complete than a relative or absolute majority of votes. *To a greater extent than an arithmetical (or mechanical) majority, it must be expressive of the existence of a representative social bloc of the greater part of the population.* Besides, it must be an *active majority*, one not only operating continuously (which is typical of any steadily developing movement) but realising the need to uphold by every possible means the gains made.

Yet during the growing revolutionary process in Chile, the forms of struggle were considered as important as its goals. Form was exalted to the rank of substance, as it were, and an absolute was made of one path. This was undoubtedly a mistake, for when the concrete situation changed, the masses found their hands tied. While the peaceful development of the revolution was in keeping with prevailing conditions and expressed the will of the popular movement, it was far from being in harmony with the mood of an enemy ready to stop the revolution at all costs and by every means, including means that were anything but peaceful. This must be borne in mind. The enemy's bellicosity and aggressiveness should never come as a surprise to revolutionaries. The enemy will always do his utmost to put up resistance. He will grasp every chance to take up arms against the people.

Every phenomenon or development is dialectically influenced by diverse factors and every concrete truth has fundamental and secondary aspects. In the light of past events, we consider that in the case of Chile the political factor certainly played the main role in the interconnection of the political and the military factor. The latter factor is a part of the former, but an essential one. Hence the immense significance of the military policy of the popular movement. It implies more than merely adopting a definite position towards the army and establishing a solid alliance with its potentially democratic part. It implies

forming a force that could make common cause, as far as possible, with the section of the army loyal to the revolution.

Experience has shown that our advance must be safeguarded not only by popular, but also by adequate military support. And the precondition for that is a constructive policy on this issue (with the Communists assuming special responsibility, of course).

Possibilities of Changing the Path

It is vitally important, therefore, to restore to the revolution (in our conceptions of it) its highly dialectical nature, always bearing in mind that this is a process that can change depending on the course of the struggle, and that at times its revolution can accelerate to the point of dictating other forms of struggle, as was the case in Russia in 1917. In other words, we must take no absolute of this or that path of the revolution, must not consider that the choice of path is final and may not be revised, or that one and the same principle should be used invariably throughout a long period of history. Switching from one form of struggle to another in other countries may not take place as rapidly as it did in Russia in the few months preceding the October Revolution. But our negative experience suggests that it is wrong in general to attribute an *unchanging* character to any particular form of struggle, to treat it as a *constant* making it possible to disregard changes in the situation, often abrupt ones, caused especially by political crises and growing contradictions.

'Peaceful path' is a correct term only in so far as it rules out civil war. But because of the many vicissitudes, it cannot bypass the law which says that violence is the 'midwife' of history. We should have always borne this in mind, should have remembered that the very act of changing path presupposes 'changing horses' and continuing our advance. It is hard to change horses in mid-stream. But then it is harder still when no preparations have been made beforehand. Irrespective of how clearly the necessity for the change is realised, the very possibility of such a change and the ability to carry it out must certainly be guaranteed. This is not a matter that can be settled at the moment of change; it requires advance preparations, which may even take years, and this is what Chile's popular movement failed to do. The revolutionary vanguard marching at the head of the masses must be really prepared to adopt if necessary the most vigorous measures against a reactionary onslaught.

What happened in Chile under Popular Unity rule was that many regarded preparations for an eventual change of path and forms of struggle as absolutely unacceptable. Another lesson taught to Popular Unity is that an atmosphere of legality admittedly makes for stricter enforcement of laws and hence gives revolutionaries more strength and can, in the end, help them to make rapid progress but that in definite cases it can contribute to enemy plans for a rebellion or coup. Unless this is properly understood, legality itself may

be used for tying the people's hands and making it even harder for them to exercise their right to legitimate defence. The people have no reason to feel bound hand and foot by legality like a Gulliver. They should regard it as a useful weapon in upholding their just cause, but never as a trap or gag.

In setting up the machinery of their conspiracy, reaction and fascism in Chile harped on absurd accusations against the Popular Unity government, saying that it had trespassed the bounds of legality. What they were after was to trample all legality underfoot (as if developing in their own way Odilon Barrot's statement, 'Legality is killing us', they set out to implement the slogan, 'Let us kill legality'). Developments showed, in particular, that they turned the arms control law into a trap for the people by using it to disarm and crush them.

All this confirms the need to respect a fundamental demand: reliance on the masses. We have said that the peaceful path is practicable only if the idea of the revolution wins the minds of the majority of the people and prompts it to act. When the forces favouring change have achieved overwhelming superiority no opportunities are left for a reactionary rising, let alone for its success. The idea of majority, which Lenin considered so important (the majority of the people are *for us*" he said in September 1917), retains its validity as a requisite of victory whatever the form of struggle.

Consequently, the alignment of forces is of decisive importance. We must always, I think, see to it that the front of advocates of change is stronger than that of their opponents and that this superiority is considerable numerically and organisationally, as well as in terms of political, ideological, cultural, propaganda and all other activities. In other words, this broad front would be stronger in regard to the quality and solidarity of the alliance, to the dynamism and effectiveness of its united action. Also its programme must be the common denominator of all factors and the elements and forces making it up. On this basis, they must operate in co-ordinated fashion, on the principles of tactical and strategic unity, as they strike joint blows in one and the same direction. It is only in this way - by operating as a genuine coalition, avoiding the rise of opposed poles or disunited action inside the movement and by developing a common programme line - that the enemy can be defeated. The preservation and extension of the scope and strength of the front and the consolidation of the majority are a vitally important factor, as experience has shown, for the advance of the revolutionary process.

I repeat, the enemy will use force for as long as he can. The revolution can do without bloodshed, but only if the majority can impose this and the minority cannot prevent it. This could have been true of the period our country went through in the closing months of 1970 and partly in 1971. However, the enemy will always do his utmost to regain his strength. Hence it is not a question of only one moment of danger, for there is danger as long as there exist reactionary forces and it increases when reaction succeeds in reversing the situation in its favour.

Consequently, the problem of the balance of forces makes it necessary to take account of its inconstancy and likely changes. It is not established once and for all except when the revolution, having consolidated its positions, overcomes this internal contradiction and eliminates antagonistic classes to build a classless society.

Throughout the period of Popular Unity rule, Chile was under a kind of dual power, which cannot, of course, be compared to the situation in Russia in 1917. In Chile there was a lawful popular government and, on the other hand, an unlawful reactionary power backed by all who earlier had dominated society. In addition to certain key economic and financial levers and the mass media, that reactionary power controlled a considerable part of the state apparatus. It skilfully exploited the miscalculations and incompetence of Popular Unity and the existence of different trends in it to bring the petty bourgeoisie into the effort to carry out reaction's plans. This large social stratum is often undecided, being attached to its own values and frightened by the stories which the enemy's machinery of psychological tenor continuously spreads. The enemy knew full well that he would get nowhere unless he won the support of the intermediate strata and influenced the heterogeneous group of people differing in political consciousness, ideology and behaviour in the climate of hysteria cunningly created through the efforts of the CIA. If the oligarchy made certain gains through its strategy of winning over the masses it was only because it had the support of other strata not belonging to its class. It succeeded in this because there was no adequate counteraction from the other side, that is, because the popular movement had no policy biding up with the programme of the movement and inspiring the intermediate social strata with confidence that they, too, would have a place in the new society.

Responsibility of the Vanguard

The decisive factor for the outcome of the struggle in favour of the people is, undoubtedly, correct leadership of the popular movement, a leadership capable of giving the masses proper guidance, keeping them informed, mobilising them for this or that necessary action and making this political majority fully aware of its responsibility and turning it into a totality of politically conscious and united forces. Needless to say, the Communist Party plays an essential role in this, as do the other popular front parties.

The Chilean popular movement doubtlessly has historic achievements to its credit and showed creative initiative throughout the period of Popular Unity rule. There developed rudimentary forms of democratic government that sprang from a people determined to change the class nature of the state, and that should be taken into account in the future as useful precedents of genuine democratic rule capable of keeping chaos under control.

However, Salvador Allende's assumption of the Presidency could not in itself alter the class nature of the state, the character of the armed forces, the police or the administrative machinery. This is why we stress that in any process following a peaceful course, it is most important to bring about an alignment of military forces in favour of revolutionary development. This is a key issue.

Popular Unity was faced with the pressing need to effect changes that would put the state apparatus under the people's organised pressure to the point of gradually placing it in the people's service. Furthermore, it was indispensable to promote active democracy involving the participation of the masses in the broadest sense of the term, strip the reactionaries of their spheres of domination and transfer all real power to the working people, to the progressive social strata.

There is no denying that in the three years it was in power, the Popular Unity government won the active support of the masses. However; confusion over the objectives - democratic or socialist ones - and the introduction of ideas alien to its programme, or based on sheer utopia made it impossible at any moment to give the initiative of the masses the right direction and secure majority support in solving every problem, as was the case with so patriotic a measure understandable to all as the nationalisation of the copper mines.

Let it be stressed that the sad conclusion of this chapter of history should not minimise the significance of so evident a reality of the past as the fact that, in less than three years, the popular government made tremendous progress by scoring valuable gains which live on in the people's memory and are part of a lasting political patrimony (even though they were subsequently destroyed by the fascist regime). They became a legacy that will again play an important mobilising role when the country has overcome its present state. It would be wrong to underestimate this experience. We must give serious consideration to the vastly positive significance and great constructive contribution of a popular movement that was broken off so tragically.

However, we maintain that unless the masses are constantly schooled in political action and in assessing the political situation, they cannot by merely following their instinct rise to the level of social awareness needed to defeat the enemy and participate consciously in making history. Hence *it is a duty of the Marxist-Leninist political vanguard*, of the Communists operating at home or abroad, *to provide the working class and the popular movement with scientific leadership at any moment*, even in the dire conditions of fascist rule. In fulfilling its fundamental mission, the Communist Party, the leading party responsible along with other parties, its allies, for the development of the revolutionary process, must solve a dialectical equation consisting of two elements: the *quality of its unity* with other forces of a popular movement not free of contradictions that can at times grow to dangerous proportions; and *its independent role* in this movement as a party which can under no circumstances, even amid discord, renounce its duty to present

its policy to the people and country with a view to strengthening and not weakening unity.

How Present-day Counter-Revolution Can Strangle Revolution

The positions of the representatives of the popular camp were undermined step by step, and eventually this became perfectly obvious and made for the success of the reactionary coup. Besides, there were shortcomings in the implementation of the working-class policy of alliances and the balance of forces in both the political and the military spheres deteriorated noticeably in the closing months. For all this, however, the negative epilogue of this period of the Chilean revolution was not due, as has been said, to the people's will, but to the crippling forcible interference and violent change brought on by the fascist coup.

It is necessary that the revolutionary process be supported by a popular majority. On the other hand, while this factor is indispensable, it does not guarantee the success of the revolution, whose progress may be upset and its gains nullified if the popular movement is unable to support the resolve of the majority through effective defence measures.

We do not mean arms alone. To achieve political results, imperialism and home reaction launched their offensive first of all in the economic sphere, that is, a sphere in which they were particularly strong and in which they could do it all the more easily. The economic offensive was combined with individual terror, which by now has become a widespread daily practice of Latin America's political reactionaries. The resulting situation was one of utter chaos, described by some as very well organised. It was organised by the CIA, which did not hesitate to use for the purpose an all-out propaganda offensive. Perhaps it was the first time that counter-revolution had used the mass media so thoroughly, on so large a scale and with such force. This is another page of history worthy of most careful study. Reaction's plans were furthered by the government's failure to take co-ordinated and organised counter-measures. The existence of two parallel policy lines within Popular Unity contributed to the success of reaction's conspiracy'. Besides, the conspirators continuously took advantage of the ultra-revolutionaries' talk about armed forces, which they did not have.

What we are trying to say is that a war in which no guns are fired requires a common, clear-cut policy that must constantly be spelled out to the masses. It is not merely a question of properly organising intelligence and counter intelligence. The task is to carry on a total political struggle aimed at disuniting the central forces of the conspiracy from top to bottom and in every respect - economically and psychologically, publicly and otherwise, but above all militarily.

Needed: A Reappraisal of the Issue of the Army

These bloody events cast a stark light on the role of the armed forces. Under-estimation of this issue translated itself into a new tragedy for the people. What we witnessed was not a mere repetition of the past or a confirmation of the lessons of a long period of history. More than before, imperialism and its domestic allies are anxious to bring the army out of the barracks. This is due to the tacit admission that the development and growing strength of the popular movement more than ever endanger imperialist and capitalist control of society and the state. Revealingly, it is no longer a question of military actions, which have been numerous in the 150-year-long history of Latin America's republics, that is, of a conspiracy against a high-ranking adventurer, of a simple replacement of a power-thirsty individual in the government palace. As a rule, now it is a matter of outright action against the popular movement, taken above all when reaction has no other means of preventing a victory of progressive forces or abolishing their gains.

This prompts us to reappraise the military question from today's point of view. No new approach to it is conceivable if we overlook the important fact that imperialism persistently seeks support among Latin American armies, which it tries to influence as an inseparable part of the forces implementing the Pentagon's global strategy. According to an imported doctrine accepted by certain domestic military leaders, the chief enemy today is not outside but inside the country and is called 'internal subversion'. At a certain juncture, the US military-industrial complex evolved the tactical principle of *Vietnamising the war*, which expected 'Asians to kill Asians'. Its present motto in our country virtually expects '*Chileans to kill Chileans*', which means that the armed forces must wage war against their own people. This would make it easier for the imperialists to assure their domination and plunder of Chile. In this context, Pinochet's statement in Uruguay that he had acted in the interests of imperialism was brazen tragicomedy. 'The United States,' he said, 'did not fire a single shot to remove communism from Chile. It was no Vietnam. No one was killed.' Indeed, no US soldier was killed, but then many thousands of Chileans were. Pinochet disregards these deaths.

Certain Pentagon political and military strategists have said that their best investment is training Latin American officers in US military academies and important Pentagon thinking. Indeed, this is what they have done. Senator William Proxmire announced in 1971 that between 1945 and 1971 the US had spent \$175,000m on the training of 320,000 servicemen from 70 independent countries. In 1965, Robert Wood, then in charge of military aid, proudly said that almost all Latin American officers had received training in the United States or in the Panama Canal Zone.

The imperialists are now reaping the fruits. In several Latin American countries, they have imposed reactionary military dictatorships in their service. And they are plotting to do the same elsewhere.

In learning the lessons of our own mistakes, we must therefore draw the following conclusion: to ensure that the revolution follows a peaceful course, we must prevent reactionaries in the armed forces from turning them into executioners and stranglers of the popular movement. In other words, we must see to it that the army stops playing the role of a super-police, that it does not operate as a domestic colonial force taking orders from the Pentagon, an insurance company or a praetorian guard protecting the interests of monopolies and latifundian holders.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the Chilean popular movement was that this question was posed inadequately, narrowly and shyly as it were, preferably at the level of individuals, to the exclusion of parties having deep roots among the people, to the exclusion of the masses. For a long time, men shirking their duties remained in charge of the army and the police. The sentiments of many high-ranking officers were little known (the case of Pinochet is the most striking, but not the only one). The information services, honeycombed with subversives, were disastrously incompetent. Besides, everything was affected by lack of unity in the government over the support for General Prats when he headed the cabinet and after his removal as commander-in-chief. It is our sincere opinion that we Communists, too, are to blame for that historical miscalculation, which was a result of the weakness and untenability of our military policy and our attitude to the armed forces.

How can a favourable change in the army be brought about? It is a very difficult task but undoubtedly a feasible one. To answer this question as correctly as possible, we must analyse the social nature of the army, its class composition and the mechanism of its activity, its changing functions in the course of history and its present role in society - in other words, the dialectics of its behaviour.

The armed forces of Latin American countries are not abstract institutions or sinister organisations destined inevitably and forever to brutally suppress their peoples. There is no need to stress here the special character of the revolutionary armed forces of Cuba, brought into being by a victorious socialist revolution. But even in the armies of those countries of the continent where there has been no revolution, we are witnessing developments that do not entitle us to a fatalistic interpretation of their role or to extreme pessimism. Karl Marx distinguished two currents in the Spanish army (historically speaking, it bore a certain similarity to the armies of the countries of one-time Spanish America in atmosphere and as a school for the training and indoctrination of troops). He saw two incipient alternatives of social and political activity for it that manifest themselves to this day: an obtuse reactionary attitude and, at the same time, a potential for revolutionary initiative, as the rising led by Rafael Riego showed. This initiative can only manifest itself in periods of political crisis. Lenin pointed to the living connection between a developing revolutionary movement and its reflection in the armed forces, growing restlessness in the army. It must be admitted, however, that it was

not this characteristic of the army that was the historic dominant, but the army's being the armed guarantee of a system based on oppression.

Chile had quite a few advocates of the theory of 'particularism' of the army, who claimed that at a definite moment it adheres to 'political neutrality'. It is only right to point out that the army always acts under the decisive influence of this or that class or movement. It would be utopian to think of the army as being politically 'neutral'. *Not so when, in a definite situation, a period of neutralisation is brought about* as a result of struggle outside and within the armed forces to foil fascist plans aimed at involving the army in a reactionary coup. In this instance, the people can lean on those elements in the army that remain loyal to the constitution. Within the framework of the concept of peaceful development of the revolution, this *neutralisation* can have a certain effect for a time.

A very important factor to be borne in mind is, of course, the class origin of the military. However, the fact that most members of the armed services come ultimately from the working class and poor peasantry manifests itself on a mass scale only under the impact of a revolutionary situation and provided there exists an organisation in the barracks that is carrying on definite ideological work.

The point is that a false social consciousness and a false conception of public duty are imposed on the military, or at least on many of them, and that this makes effective ideological and political work on our part all the more necessary.

According to a view commonly held by students of this problem, there was evidence of three currents in the Chilean army prior to the coup. They are classified - without sufficient scientific accuracy - as follows:

(1) patriotic servicemen, or 'constitutionalists'; (2) servicemen loyal to their professional duty, and (3) servicemen favouring fascism. This classification is more or less close to the truth and retains its validity. However, it would be mechanistic to overlook the changes subsequently brought about by the operation of internal and external factors. The struggle, including the ideological struggle, which, of course, is going on in Chilean society in spite of the monopoly of the mass media held by a totalitarian state, has its effect on the armed forces as well. The country's anti-fascist forces, its popular and democratic movement, can and should contribute actively to this struggle.

There are objective prerequisites for this: a deep-rooted, disastrous economic crisis; a political vacuum around the junta, the international isolation of the regime, and the hatred which the vast majority of the population feel for it. Today, three years after the imposition of the dictatorship, various subjective factors are maturing too. The role of the working class has increased over the past year. The Communist Party perseveres in its guiding role, braving savage repression. Its organisations are active throughout the country. The major popular opposition parties are reorganising at the national level.

Discord within the ruling group is mounting. There is more and more evidence of vacillation in army circles, which daily witness growing condemnation of the junta by a population convinced that the military clique, far from solving any of the country's problems, has aggravated them. More and more people in the army condemn the unbridled terrorism and unprecedented brutality of the junta and the countless abuses of DINA. The activities of this agency, which depends directly on Pinochet, are marked by a sinister man-hunt and increasingly numerous lists of 'missing persons' containing the names of prisoners of Chile's gestapo whose arrest the regime refuses to admit.

We know that hastening the end of today's nightmare, of the people's suffering, depends largely on ourselves, on the activity of Popular Unity and the anti-fascist forces generally. In drawing numerous lessons from the Chilean experience, many of which are bitter while others are instructive, and all of which are equally useful, we consider that by carrying on a selfless, extremely dangerous but increasingly widespread and organised struggle, the people will pave the way for changing the situation. This will make it possible not only to return Chile to its people when the time comes but to contribute to the elaboration of certain pressing theoretical and political problems.
